

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 11149 071708Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
LAB-04 SIL-01 L-03 H-01 DODE-00 PA-01 AGRE-00
DOE-15 SOE-02 OES-07 INT-05 /136 W
-----098354 081252Z /41

R 071659Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7106
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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USEEC

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: IN, EAID, EEC
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S VISIT TO EC COMMISSION
-- JUNE 5

REF: BRUSSELS 18207

1. INDIAN PRIME MINISTER DESAI VISITED BRUSSELS JUNE 5.
OFFICIALLY A GUEST OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT, DESAI ALSO
HAD SEVERAL HOURS OF TALKS AT EC COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS.
IN ADDITION TO LUNCHING WITH COMMISSION PRESIDENT JENKINS,
THE PRIME MINISTER MET WITH COMMISSIONER HAFERKAMP, EC
VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND ENERGY COM-
MISSIONER BRUNNER. DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING
HIS TALKS WITH COMMISSION OFFICIALS, DESAI INDICATED HE
HAD HAD VERY "USEFUL AND CORDIAL" DISCUSSIONS. THE
EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN BRUSSELS, HE COMMENTED, "SERVED TO
IMPROVE MUTUAL TRUST AND GOODWILL" BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY
AND THE GOI. AMONG SPECIFIC TOPICS REVIEWED BY THE TWO
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 11149 071708Z

SIDES WERE:

-- TRADE COOPERATION, INCLUDING THE NEED TO UP-DATE AND
IMPROVE THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT
WHICH EXPIRES NEXT YEAR. IT WAS ALSO AGREED, IN
PRINCIPLE, TO ESTABLISH AN INDIAN TRADE CENTER IN
BRUSSELS (REFTEL);

-- TECHNICAL COOPERATION INCLUDING EC ASSISTANCE TO INDIA IN THE FIELDS OF SOLAR ENERGY AND COAL GASIFICATION. THE EC SIDE REPORTEDLY AGREED "TO CONSIDER" THE CREATION OF AN EC CENTER FOR TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE SUB-CONTINENT. IN CLOSING, DESAI MADE THE FOLLOWING REMARKS TO REPORTERS: "I DID NOT COME HERE TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS. WE JUST TALKED ABOUT THE WAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. INDIA DOES NOT WANT ANY GENERAL ASSISTANCE, BUT HELP IS WELCOME FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IF IT COMES IN A FRIENDLY WAY."

2. EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED DESAI'S VISIT UNDERSCORE THE "GOODWILL" NATURE OF THE ENCOUNTER. ACCORDING TO THESE OFFICIALS, IN THE COURSE OF EXCHANGING VIEWS WITH COMMISSION REPS, HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER REGISTERED GOI CONCERN REGARDING EASIER ACCESS TO EC MARKETS FOR SPECIFIC INDIAN EXPORTS, INCLUDING JUTE, TOBACCO, STEEL AND FOOTWEAR (BUT NOT TEXTILES). THE SAME SOURCES TELL US THAT THE GOI IS INTERESTED IN WIDENING THE SCOPE OF THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL CDOPERATION AGREEMENT, WHEN IT IS RENEGOTIATED, TO INCLUDE PROMOTION OF JOINT VENTURES AND INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT. THE EC, AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO BE OPTIMISTIC ON THIS SCORE, GIVEN THE RESTRICTIVE NATURE OF INDIA'S FOREIGN INVESTMENT POLICIES. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS AGREED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 11149 071708Z

ON JUNE 5 THAT OFFICIALS ON THE TWO SIDES SHOULD BEGIN AT AN EARLY DATE TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR RENEWAL OF THE 1974 AGREEMENT.

3. LOCAL INDIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS TELL US THAT THE TWO SIDES ALSO HAD A GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, INCLUDING THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE. THEY SAY THAT WHILE THE COMMON FUND WAS NOT MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY, DESAI ASSERTED THAT THE ON-GOING DIALOGUE SHOULD BE "ACCELERATED" IN THE FUTURE. REGARDING RECENT EVENTS IN AFRICA, THESE SAME SOURCES INDICATE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD EC OFFICIALS THAT PRESENT PROBLEMS THERE SHOULD BE RESOLVED WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, ALTHOUGH HE REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON SPECIFIC COUNTRIES OR SPECIFIC EVENTS. HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, MINISTERIAL VISITS, COMMISSIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BRUSSE11149
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780239-0739
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780688/aaaacxjk.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 514b5e90-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BRUSSELS 18207
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2460821
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S VISIT TO EC COMMISSION -- JUNE 5
TAGS: EAID, IN, EEC, (DESAI, MORARJI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/514b5e90-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014